

Message Text

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PFOR, EG, UR, UN

SUBJECT: ZAYYAT INTERVIEW WITH LE MONDE

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

1. SUMMARY: IN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH LE MONDE' S MIDLE
EAST CORRESPONDENT ERIC ROULEAN, EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
ZAYYAT COMMENTED ON CURRENT STATE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, UNSC
DEBATE ON MIDDLE EAST AND PROSPECTS FOR UNION WITH LIBYA. END

SUMMARY.

2. ON RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS, ZAYYAT SAID EGYPT WOULD NOT
DENOUNCE ITS TREATY WITH USSR WHICH WOULD BE "ABSURD" FROM
EGYPTIAN POINT OF VIEW. RECENT ISMAIL VISIT TO MOSCOW HAD NOT
FAILED FOR SIMPLE REASON THAT VISIT HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR LONG
TIME AND HAD NO OTHER OBJECTIVE THAN TO EVALUATE SITUATION IN LIGHT
OF NIXON-BREZHNEV CONVERSATIONS. ZAYYAT SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW
NIXON-BREZHNEV TALKS HAD NOT LED TO AGREEMENT TO FRESHEN CONFLICT
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IN NEAR EAST. EGYPT HAD NO REASON TO DOUBT GOOD FAITH OF SOVIET

FRIENDS AND CONSIDERED THAT AGREEMENT TO AVOID SUPER-POWER CONFRONTATION WAS MERITORIOUS. ZAYYAT SAID EGYPT HAD NO REASON TO COMPLAIN ABOUT ARMS IT HAD RECEIVED FROM USSR. MOSCOW'S SUPPORT WAS OBVIOUSLY SUPERIOR TO THAT FROM WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, EGYPT'S SOVIET FRIENDS EVIDENTLY DID NOT SHARE EGYPTIAN FEELING OF URGENCY ABOUT SETTLEMENT OF ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT. RUSSIA, LIKE OTHER GREAT POWERS, HAD OTHER PROBLEMS TO SOLVE AND OTHER PREOCCUPATIONS WHICH DID NOT COINCIDE WITH EGYPT'S.

3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER RUSSIA AND AMERICA WERE AGREED ON NEED TO CREATE PALESTINIAN STATE, HE SAID THAT IF THAT WERE THE CASE, EGYPTIANS WOULD BE THE FIRST TO CONGRATULATE THEM. PALESTINANS HAVE A RIGHT TO A HOMELAND EVEN IF MADAME MEIR DENIES THEIR EXISTENCE. NONETHELESS, EGYPT DOES NOT PRETEND TO SPEAK IN NAME OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WHOSE REPRESENTATIVES ARE CAPABLE OF DECIDING THEIR OWN FATE.

4. ON UNSC MEETING, ZAYYAT SAID THAT DEBATE COULD LEAD TO MAJOR TURNING POINT IN MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. DECISIONS EGYPT MUST TAKE WILL DEPEND ON ATTITUDE OF UN. IN AFTERMATH OF 1967 WAR, EGYPT HAD THREE OPTIONS: A) CAPITULATION AND INTEGRATION INTO ISRAELI SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, B) ARMED STRUGGLE AND C) POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RESISTANCE TO ACHIEVE DEFINITIVE SETTLEMENT. EGYPT HAD CHOSEN THIRD ROUTE, BUT AFTER SIX YEARS OF INCESSANT EFFORTS IT WAS CONVINCED IT WAS IN AN IMPASSE. SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE MARKED END OF A PHASE. IF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ASSUMED ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO RESOLVE PROBLEM BY CONFINING ITS DECISION TO SUPPORT A SETTLEMENT BASED ON RESTITUTION OF CONQUERED TERRITORIES, MORAL SUPPORT WHICH EGYPT MIGHT HAVE OBTAINED WOULD GIVE A NEW ELAN TO ITS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS. IN OPPOSITE CASE, EGYPT WOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE A NEW ROUTE, KEEPING IN MIND THAT CAPITULATION IS RULED OUT. PERHAPS IN SUCH A SITUATION EGYPT WOULD ADOPT POINT OF VIEW OF CERTAIN ARAB COUNTRIES SUCH AS SYRIA, LIBYA AND IRAQ WHO, BELIEVING THAT ISRAEL WOULD REFUSE ALL SOLUTIONS EXCEPT A "DIKTAT", HAVE REJECTED RESOLUTION 242.

5. TOUCHING ON UNION WITH LIBYA, ZAYYAT SAID SEPTEMBER 1 WAS DATE NOT FOR FUSION BUT FOR REFERENDUM. NUMEROUS STAGES HAD TO BE PASSED THROUGH BEFORE THIS OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED. UNFORTUNATE EXPERIENCE OF EARLIER SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN UNION AND EUROPEAN EXAMPLE UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE LED TO GREAT PRUDENCE. EGYPT DOES NOT WANT AN "EPHEMERAL" ALLIANCE BASED ONLY ON ASPIRATIONS BUT A SOLID UNITY BASED ON CONCRETE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL, SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REALITIES. IRWIN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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